



# City Local Services

## FAQs

Becoming a multisite church has been part of The Street's vision since it was first on our leadership's hearts in 2016. In May 2022, Senior Pastors Simon and Jenny Gill announced that The Street City would continue to gather in four places around the Wellington region for the remainder of 2022. The four local services are: Mt Victoria, West, Hutt and Porirua. This is in addition to our other two locations - East and Night.

In this season of change, it is so important to have clarity and unity across the church about how we got here, and where we are going. Amos 3:3 says *"How can two walk together unless they are in agreement?"* We hope you find the following FAQs helpful as we navigate and explore this season together for the glory of God.

### Origins

#### **Where did the idea for these local services come from?**

When City Lead Pastor Jerram Watts took up the role in January 2021, he and his wife Gabrielle felt the Lord put three key things on their hearts: pursue discipleship, prayer, and gathering people locally. The third one felt like an outlier, but Jerram started by connecting Life Group leaders by suburbs so they could connect and begin strengthening local relationships. When the Covid-19 Traffic Light system and gathering limits came into effect, Jerram and his staff (Matt, Floyd, Emma, Mel, and Jamie) organised a number of smaller local gatherings around the region where people could still meet in homes, while staying within the government's capacity limits. There were gatherings in Brooklyn, Mt Vic, Karori, Johnsonville, Hutt, Porirua and Waikanae. As these gatherings continued, they started to grow, strengthen, and many people were giving feedback that they felt a real sense of connection and that God was at work in this new way of gathering. At the end of summer 2022, the Leadership Team and Elders agreed to continue these gatherings for the rest of the year in order to explore what the future of local services might look like.

### **What is the actual goal of these local services?**

The goal of these local services is to help people become total followers of Jesus Christ, and to make our gatherings more accessible in order to pursue our vision of seeing one percent of unchurched Wellington become baptised followers of Jesus Christ. We believe that connecting, empowering and discipling our people in the communities where they work and live can increase their love and burden for their neighbours; that having a physical and noticeable presence in local communities makes inviting unchurched people to a gathering or a life group more accessible; and that by reducing the dependency on staff to “put on” on a church service, more people have the opportunity to serve and lead in the body of Christ. It’s about increasing the ability for us to be more missional in our communities.

### **Why only services in Mt Victoria, West, Hutt and Porirua?**

The new local services in West, Hutt and Porirua all have a history, of varying lengths, of people gathering to pray, there were clear established leaders at each service, they each had a building rented that was available, strong buy-in from those regularly attending, and local life group leaders who were invested.

### **Who made the decision for City to trial multiple services?**

Senior Pastors Simon and Jenny Gill together with the Elders.

### **What was the consultation process for this decision?**

What we are exploring for the rest of 2022 is intended to be an extended consultation process with those who call The Street City their home. We didn’t want to make a permanent decision for how The Street City would gather without giving everyone the opportunity to engage in the services, get involved in serving, and to seek God to discern how he would have us proceed. We want everyone to have ownership of this decision and for it not be a “top-down” mandate that everyone simply has to follow. Before we made the call to extend this way of gathering, this consultation period, we had a number of conversations with the appointed leaders for the new services, and also two Zoom meetings with all the City Life Group leaders to test the approach, and then refine the approach based on their feedback. We continue to invite people to email in their feedback of how the local services are going to [city@thestreet.org.nz](mailto:city@thestreet.org.nz).

## **The Picture Now**

### **Who is leading each of these services?**

Mt Victoria: Jerram Watts and the City team

West: Jerram and Gabrielle Watts supported by a leadership group

Hutt: Bryce and Olivia Williams, with support from Matt and Jo Bate and a leadership group

Porirua: Martin and Susan Sheldon, with support from a leadership group

### **What does this mean for pastoral oversight at each local service?**

Each local service is still considered part of The Street City location, so still falls under the leadership of Lead Pastor Jerram and the City staff (Matt Swank, Mel Lienert, Floyd Edwards, Jamie Rodwell and Emma

Roche). Simon and Jenny Gill are also providing oversight and support specifically to the Hutt and Porirua gatherings. The local service leaders are supported by the City staff, but the Sunday-specific pastoral support is provided by the service leaders, life group leaders and any elders present at the gatherings.

**Are there Elders at each local service and location? If not, why not?**

There is at least one of our current Elders at each of The Street's six services except for Hutt and Night. The Street Night hasn't recently had an elder as part of its location, and no Street elder currently lives in the Hutt Valley. However, our current Elders are taking turns to visit these other services. We strongly desire elder presence at each local service, so this is something being presently looked at by the Elders.

**Why do some local services have a worship team playing live more often than others?**

The City congregation used to meet at one location (Hania St) and have all its members present from which to draw people for worship, service leading, Connections, etc. Now that this congregation has been spread across the region, the pools of people to draw teams from at each location has shrunk significantly. This poses the challenge of some local services having a lot of musicians and worship leaders to draw from, and others having fewer. This also presents an opportunity for those who may not have considered being involved in worship at such a large gathering in Hania St to step up and get involved in smaller gatherings. It's also worth noting that The Street East still has weeks where it uses pre-recorded worship too.

**I prefer live worship and live teaching, when can I expect this to happen at all local services? Or is the idea to continue with video content into the future?**

Each week on a Thursday evening, the coming Sunday's entire service is pre-recorded and then broadcast at 10am online. Each service has access to the full video for their Sunday gathering, but has the autonomy to build live elements of the service where teams enable. This means some weeks a service you attend will have live teaching and live worship, while other weeks may have pre-recorded worship or a pre-recorded sermon. Our desire is for all of our local services to have live worship and live teaching every week, but it will take some time to build the teams up to be able to do that.

It's worth mentioning that one of the reasons we could even consider continuing these local services was due to the provision of the pre-recorded content, which reduces the burden on these new smaller gatherings. We hope that this reduced burden could help divert energy out towards reaching and serving the local community.

**What's happening with the children's ministry at the new local services?**

Here is what you can expect from all City services for the rest of 2022:

- A children's programme will run during the sermon slot of the service for children up to 12 years old;
- The nature of children's ministry at each of our services will depend on the number of people available to serve on those teams. It's amazing what can be accomplished when lots of people serve in small ways.

- 'Follow the sermon' worksheets will continue to be provided for intermediate-aged children

One of the things we are most excited about is the growing sense of us operating as a body. Where everyone has a part to play and everyone has a place to serve. Everyone in the waka is paddling! What we've been celebrating at the local services so far is that children's ministry has never been so rich with people from all stages of life investing into the discipleship of children. This is a win for children as well as for adults! We therefore want to continue to encourage all people who are part of The Street to play their part. For parents, young adults and older adults to be part of discipling the next generation. We intend to keep the curriculum simple and resourced well, so people of varying experience can step in and lead it through.

### **How do The Massive and Squad youth groups fit into all this?**

Our youth are incredibly precious to the church, so we aren't rushing a decision about how The Massive and Squad reflect City's local service approach. Youth Pastor Matt Swank has already started some local life groups for young people so they can engage with peers locally, but Friday night gatherings will by and large continue to meet centrally at Hania St.

### **Have you engaged with other churches in the local areas as to The Street's presence there?**

We have met with local pastors in the Western suburbs specifically about The Street's presence there, and are beginning to meet leaders in Porirua and the Hutt. Simon, Jenny, Jerram, Tom and Anna are involved in Wellington Pastors gatherings where they meet monthly with other pastors around the city to pray and encourage one another in their ministries, so these local gatherings have been part of those conversations. It's also important to acknowledge that we're already a church meeting in local communities through life groups. Our local services therefore allow the people who are already in the area to gather locally on a Sunday. Our heart has always been to reach more unchurched people rather than encouraging people to join The Street from other churches.

### **How can I get involved in serving at the local services?**

Great question! You can sign up on the Church Center app, or ask a service leader at your local gathering on Sunday. Or you can fill in this [form](#).

### **How is what is happening at City different to The Street East and The Street Night?**

East and Night are staffed "locations" of The Street because they have Lead Pastors dedicated to their locations: Simon and Jenny at East, Tom and Anna at Night. City is the only location that has multiplied, but still falls under Jerram's pastoral leadership. This means that the four new services aren't locations; they are local services under the City umbrella.

**To be honest, I really just miss having a large gathering with hundreds of people in the same room. Will we ever go back to that again?**

We hear you on this - there was, and is, something wonderful about gathering together as family, and having the chorus of hundreds of voices singing, and seeing people from all over the city together in one place. If these local services stay permanently, it will be important for us to be able to bring the whole Street family together from time-to-time, perhaps in a forum like a conference or large worship event.

Bear in mind, our hope is that these local services flourish and continue to grow! We want all members of The Street to be praying about and investing directly into their local service so that our buildings can be full of people who are growing closer to God.

For now though, it's okay to miss what was, and you may need to take some time to grieve the loss of the kind of gathering you've been used to - and that's okay. But we believe the Lord is leading us to greener pastures, and how we gather needs to be decided by why we gather, so we can't hold on to a particular way of gathering too tightly. If gathering more locally enables us to be more missional and to reach more people with the good news of Jesus Christ, then surely that is worth sacrificing some things that we love.

## **The Future**

### **Will Johnsonville/Northern become the next service?**

In May, we announced that we were also exploring a gathering in the northern suburbs. However, a service is unlikely to begin there this year. In part this is because we don't want to stretch too far too quickly and another service could be a step too far right now. Right now we do see a growing passion for outreach in the area, and this is vital before we consider starting a service. If you live in that area, we'd encourage you to get stuck into local prayer meetings and outreach while still attending services in Mt Vic. If you'd like to join these prayer meetings, email [city@thestreet.org.nz](mailto:city@thestreet.org.nz)

### **How will The Street leadership make a decision on which local services will continue into 2023?**

This is something that the Leadership Team and Elders are currently praying and working through in partnership with the leaders at local services. A big step that we've taken is to confirm we want to be a church that's locally present. This means that we dream of vibrant, faith-filled local church communities around the city. It means that even if the current way we are doing local services proves to be unsustainable, we will work to find a better way of helping our church to be locally present.

### **What happens if some of the local services are stopped at the end of 2022?**

The hope would be that if a local service needed to stop at the end of 2022, that it would be a "not now" decision, rather than a "never" decision. As we have shared, we believe God is calling The Street to be a locally present church, so we hope if a local service closes down it would be temporary. In this case though, the people from those local services would be most welcome at any of the other local services, and we would still encourage those in the locations to gather, pray and seek God for their location.

**What is going to happen to the buildings at Hania St if they aren't used by as many people on a Sunday?**

The buildings at 9 and 21 Hania St are still important God-given assets to The Street, which are still used throughout the week by church groups and non-church groups alike. We of course have our Mt Vic service that meets in the Worship Centre each Sunday morning and our Night location holds their service there fortnightly.